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THE DIRECTOR OF
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE


National Intelligence Council

30 June 1987

NOTE FOR: NIOs
SRP

FROM: C/NIC

The attached NFIB minutes concern Judge Webster's first meeting as DCI, which addressed the seminal questions of the objectivity and integrity of the estimative process. The minutes provide additional insight into the Director's and the community's views on this area--which are being considered in the development of the two action items listed at the outset of the minutes.


Frank B. Horton III
Major General, USAF

Attachment:
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24 June 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD PRINCIPALS

FROM:

Executive Secretary, NFIB

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SUBJECT: Minutes of the 216th NFIB Meeting, 1 June 1987,
1400 Hours

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Summary of Decisions

The Chairman, Director of Central Intelligence Webster, with the concurrence of the NFIB principals, instructed MGen Horton, USAF, Chairman of the National Intelligence Council (NIC), to produce a second draft of the report due the National Security Council on maintaining the integrity and objectivity of national foreign intelligence estimates.

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The Chairman, also with the concurrence of the principals, instructed Mr. Hutchinson, Vice Chairman of the NIC, to establish a working group to redraft the guidelines governing the production of national intelligence estimates.

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Minutes of the Meeting

The Chairman, Director of Central Intelligence Webster, convened the meeting and noted that he approaches with keen anticipation the task assigned him to demonstrate to the Tower Commission, the National Security Council, and the President how they can be sure of the integrity and objectivity of national foreign intelligence estimates. The Intelligence Community has no more important responsibility than to guarantee policymakers that they will receive the completely objective intelligence estimates they have every right to expect. The Board has before it a study, written by MGen Horton, Chairman of the National Intelligence Council, which reviews how existing safeguards have operated in the past and recommends how they might be strengthened in the future. The Chairman then thanked the principals for the comments they had provided on the subject and turned the floor over to General Horton.

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General Horton introduced his two Vice Chairmen, Messrs. Fuller and Hutchinson. He reported that each principal has before him an outline of the briefing he will now give. Prior to the meeting, he had circulated to the principals through the NFIB Secretariat the draft of a paper that would respond to the Tower Commission Report and to the President's charge in National Security Decision Directive 266 that the DCI review the process by which national foreign intelligence estimates are produced and report his findings by 31 July 1987. [REDACTED]

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When addressing the task of responding, the General continued, one must consider that the objective of national intelligence estimating is dual--i.e., producing estimates that have policy relevance without policy prescription. The corollaries to this objective must also be considered. The estimators need a policy input; they must seek the policymakers' questions and insights, but not the policymakers' answers. And the estimators must provide a policy output; their product must draw the implications of their conclusions, but not advocate any particular policy. [REDACTED]

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Balances need to be struck during the process of estimating by the National Intelligence Officers and by others as well. The estimators must interact with policymakers, but maintain their independence from them. They must provide not only what the policymaker wants to know, but also what he needs to know. While the estimators need to focus on a policymaker's topic, they need to place it in proper context, which may well prove to be larger than anticipated and change the outcome of the estimate. Estimates must examine the conventional wisdom on an issue, but also challenge it. Estimators must certainly examine all the evidence on an issue, but, when evidence is lacking, they must not shrink from offering the insights the Community may nonetheless be able to offer. [REDACTED]

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A further balance, the General proceeded, is that US activity is a major factor to be considered when estimating, while the outcome of an estimate will have major implications for future US activity. Estimators must assess both risks and opportunities for the US, and here they will march up to the fine line short of policy prescription. They owe it to their readers to engage in prediction, including which outcomes are most likely. But they owe it also to their readers to make their uncertainties clear by, for example, providing alternative possible scenarios and the indicators of movement in one direction or another. And, finally, estimators must report that the Community has a consensus view, when doing so is responsible. But they must also report a diversity of views when it exists, not watering an estimate down to destroy or obscure diversity, preferably including it in the text whenever possible. [REDACTED]

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As many of the principals recognized in their comments, the General reported, personnel are the key to the estimative process. No process can succeed if the personnel involved are inadequate, nor can any reasonable process fail if the personnel involved are of high quality. The NIC is seeking such highly qualified personnel and, with the principals' help, has been having more success of late. These personnel need to understand their various roles as set forth by the DCI and, when managing the estimative process, their need to elicit alternative views. Quality estimate drafters and principals' representatives for coordination are also required; drafters

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need to be freed up for full-time attention to their task and to rise above any parent-organization bias. And representatives need to know and argue well their agencies' views. Principals must make certain that their representatives are fully acquainted with their views and with the broader perspective the principals bring to the estimative process. And policymakers must be involved, focusing on the beginning and end of the process. [REDACTED]

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The estimative process, the General judged, is a circular one from the selection of a topic to arriving at terms of reference (TORs) to the draft itself to NFIB coordination and approval to any follow-up indicated. Each stage in the process is interactive with both the previous and subsequent stages. For the process to work successfully, we must adhere faithfully to the key safeguards built into it. We must circumscribe policymaker involvement, especially during the drafting phase. We must screen and pace estimative production. The NIC hopes to do a better job of this, weeding out those projects that would be only nice to do and making sure that there is time to work normal production along with those fast-paced projects that recommend themselves from time to time. [REDACTED]

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Further safeguards are alternative inputs, topics, and questions that should, when appropriate, be sought from academia, think tanks, and elsewhere. NIO solicitation of alternative projections and views is another. And so is clearly identified competitive analysis, whether by various agencies, individuals within agencies, the NIOs themselves, or contractors. Evaluation, review, and coordination by the principals and their representatives are also safeguards, as is the Senior Review Panel. And we must market our product responsibly, not turning an estimate written to avoid policy prescription into oral advocacy when delivering it. [REDACTED]

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How well have these safeguards worked, the General asked? He judged reasonably well, but this is no time to sit back. The principals in their comments pointed to a number of areas that can be improved. The most common was pressure to reach consensus during coordination of an estimate (five principals). We have reinforced to the NIOs their responsibility to seek alternative views, while the principals should reinforce the responsibility of their representatives to advance these views. Second (four principals) came raising the Community status of the NIC, primarily by assuring that the NIOs, their assistants, and the members of the NIC's analytic group represent a broad cross section of the Community. As he has said, the NIC is working on this, but it needs the principals' help. [REDACTED]

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Too many estimates and too little time for consideration (three principals each) came next, and he agrees. The NIC will be working to reduce the size of its production program to help in both areas. TORs would profit from greater attention to construction and coordination, in the judgment of three principals. No doubt, TORs are central, and they will continued to be given our close attention. One suggestion was made that TORs be brought before the Board for the principals' explicit coordination. It should not, however, be necessary to do so in most cases. Instead, he proposes to continue to circulate draft TORs and to solicit the principals' views through representatives when TORs are being coordinated. The principals retain the right upon distribution of coordinated TORs to reopen any with which they are unhappy, and they may always request review at an NFIB meeting. And it may be a good idea to bring the TORs of a few particularly important estimates to the Board, such as those of the upcoming estimate on Whither the USSR: Soviet Policy and Politics into the 1990s (NIE 11-18-87). [REDACTED]

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Improving the content of estimates (three principals) is, like many of the other concerns, a two-way street. It is the responsibility of the NIOs to work closely with the drafter to get a quality product and not to water it down during coordination to the point that it loses its sharp edges. But it is also the principals' and their representatives' responsibility to ensure that their views, and especially alternative views, are adequately made known. To handle late changes to a draft, whether by the DCI or an NFIB principal (two principals), the General proposed continuing a recently begun procedure. If the change is minor, such as repositioning text, this can be handled by the NIOs and the representatives prior to Board meetings. But, if the change is substantive, the DCI or principal would bring it to the NFIB table for discussion. If that discussion indicates that the principals feel the need for additional staffing, the estimate could then be remanded for further work at the representatives' level prior to reconsideration. [REDACTED]

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As for limiting policymaker participation, the thrust of the comments was that we must be ever vigilant, and we might adopt a procedure similar to one noted in DIA's comments whereby, in those rare cases when a policymaker believes he must be involved during the drafting stage, it be allowed only with the explicit permission of the appropriate principal and be reported to the Board. On the NIOs' managerial role (two principals), the NIOs must focus the process and gather the variety of views that exist. It is equally important that the principals and their representatives contribute their views during coordination. Domination of the process by forceful individuals (two principals) must not be allowed. All representatives must be encouraged to speak out, and they must be prepared to do so. Finally, reaffirming the guidelines for producing estimates, which were last drafted in 1981, was recommended by two principals. They need to be redrafted, making whatever changes at the margins that seem required. [REDACTED]

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As for the report to be forwarded to the National Security Council, the General recommended, the DCI will note that NFIB has been consulted and that he has concluded that the system works well, but that the following things have been undertaken to sustain and, where possible, improve it. These include revising the production plan and reemphasizing key safeguards, both as they apply to personnel and procedures. A few changes to procedures may be beneficial at the margin and will be made as necessary. The Community will launch an ongoing effort to redraft guidelines to capture the current safeguards and any marginal changes that have been determined to be potentially efficacious. Vice Chairman Hutchinson will chair a working group that will draw on the comments the principals have offered before, during the meeting today, and in the future, and, working with their representatives, will draft new guidelines for DCI approval. And NFIB will continue to closely monitor the further actions to be taken, including the new guidelines. [REDACTED]

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Retaking the floor, the Chairman stated that he has a number of observations to make. There is a legal term, outcome determinative, that well describes a uniform concern about the estimative process--i.e., that we arrive at the judgments we set out to seek--and any such practice must be rigorously avoided. He considers ensuring the integrity and objectivity of estimates to be one of the more significant efforts to be undertaken, even in the short term. We must signal our desire to produce objective estimates that are, at the same time, relevant and usable by policymakers. [REDACTED]

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There is also the belief, the Chairman continued, that estimates deliver only the bad news. Rather than estimating that there is no hope, we must point to US risks and opportunities. Such charges require a response to reassure policymakers that they need not be afraid of our product because we are following appropriate procedures and are arriving at sound judgments on the basis of the information available. He takes the point that estimates may not present only the evidence and that experienced analysts can go beyond the evidence to arrive at legitimate judgments about the future. His background, of course, inclines him most toward examining the evidence and then making logical projections, not toward peering into a crystal ball. Success in this area may depend on choice of words so that the policymaker will know when the estimators are going beyond the hard facts. []

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On dissent, the Chairman judges that it can be handled without losing an estimate's sharpness if there is no inappropriate pressure to reach a consensus. There is plenty of room in estimates for marked disagreements, whether they are reflected in the body of the estimate or in footnotes, depending on the demands of editorial and literary quality. []

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On process, a good one can drive a good result, but it cannot guarantee one. The key, rather, is involving the right people, giving them the time to do their job, and their enjoying the principals' support. If these conditions do not exist, the resulting problems will be brought to the Board's meetings, and we lose a lot when we try to come to final terms here. []

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Several principals have raised questions about the adequacy of TORs. He agrees that they are most important and must be clear and well calculated to deliver a quality result. He encourages the principals to become involved early on in setting TORs. Concluding, the Chairman invited the principals to comment, especially on the draft report to the NSC, stating that he will have something to say later about DCI participation in the estimative process. He thereupon turned the floor over to the Vice Chairman, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence Gates. []

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The Vice Chairman stated that he, like the Chairman, is primarily interested in hearing the others' views. On the consensus problem, it is one that has been worked on for the past several years. In the effort to encourage dissents, some NIOs have gone so far that they have stirred up arguments where there were none before. The inescapable fact is that the current process works against diversity, even though no one seeks to suppress it. The representatives the principals select are, with few exceptions, relatively junior; there are several bureaucratic layers between them and their principals. It is with great trepidation that these junior officers, in order to represent their agencies well during coordination of an estimate, attempt to galvanize their organizations, which may have disagreements within, to arrive at a positions they can put on the table. Bureaucratic realities weigh against diversity. []

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Over the years, the Vice Chairman continued, dissents of only two types have tended to arise: (1) technical and/or long-standing, as on a weapon system, or (2) those distancing a dissenter from an entire estimate. As a result, there has not been much interesting debate or thorough discussion of the issues at the Board's meetings. The keys here are who the principals appoint to represent them, how close a relationship they have with their

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principals, and how much backing they enjoy. And he is not referring to any particular agency. The NIC had considered at one point raising the level of rank of representatives, but had abandoned the idea on the practical grounds that more senior people do not have the considerable time required to coordinate estimates. Pressure to reach a consensus is the issue the principals most commented on, yet all agree there is little, if any, pressure brought to bear. The fact of life is that the system is resistant to the emergence of divergent views, and the principals must act aggressively to foster them. []

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Vice Chairman Fuller observed that representatives too often consider a recommended word change a matter of dissent, which in fact it is not. And when a disagreement does in fact arise, too often the representatives' preferred alternative to developing and including the dissent in an estimate is to water the offending judgment down. The Vice Chairman agreed. []

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Lieutenant General Odom, USA, Director of the National Security Agency, next took the floor at the Chairman's invitation. He reported that, as he has reflected on the issues before the Board, with whose work he has been associated from 1981 to the present, he reached the conclusion that these issues can be understood only in context. He recalls that he initially considered that the Community faced a log jam of evidence that had not been properly digested and that a large number of its fundamental judgments needed to be rethought. Such an effort was indeed launched and, over the space of some two years, the Community dramatically changed its findings. []

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When the Community completed this process, the General continued, it lost much of its intellectual energy, and he sees the task now as how to regenerate it. One example of the malaise is the principals' lack of involvement in setting TORs, which are instead delegated down into their bureaucracies. Yet the principals' early involvement is an essential element for the process to work well. Do we select the proper topics for estimating, and are we as aware as we should be of what is going on in the policy world? While we are not in all that bad a shape, and we have just completed a healthy period, he does have the sense that we have been drifting for the past year and a half. The issue is how can the process be revitalized to restore its dynamism. []

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The Chairman asked if overtasking is the main culprit. General Odom responded that he is not certain, but that the Chairman's question raises others that may be relevant. He has on occasion asked himself what difference it will make whether a given estimate is written or not if it does not have implications for US resource allocation. During his tenure as Army Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, he had observed that a major product could be killed in the process of revalidating a threat. Where does the Community's product come to bear? One advantage he does see in a Community product, such as the Soviet strategic estimate 11-3/8, is that it does require that all the Community's parts play from the same sheet of music. The utility of the economic and political estimates, in contrast, varies and depends on how well they are used by the principals within their own departments. []

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The Vice Chairman noted that the majority of estimates are generated by the Community itself and by the DCI on the basis of his participation in the policy process. The military intelligence organizations, for example, request a fair number of estimates on military-related issues. The State Department

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is the primary requester outside the Community, but the NSC and its staff, Treasury, and Energy request few. Ironically, and sadly, the role of the Community and the DCI is predominant when it comes to selecting estimates to draft. General Horton added that more requests have been received of late from the NSC. []

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General Odom commented that he has no objection to the majority of estimates being generated within the Community, as long as we are confident that we are abiding by rules that prevent abuse of the system for our own parochial ends. Indeed, the Community should initiate estimates when it perceives problems about which it believes the policy community should be warned. Such estimates not only force policymakers to think about matters not on their agendas, but also grant the Community greater entree to policymaking circles. And they have the added function of forcing the Community's analysts to talk with one another, without which confusion on a given issue would be higher. In summary, he believes the principals should be involved in the process earlier and play a heavier role in selecting estimate topics. General Horton said that he would welcome the principals' involvement. []

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The Vice Chairman asked General Odom whether TORs would come to his attention if they were to be considered at an NFIB meeting? The General responded in the affirmative. Many TORs are now flabby; one cannot figure out what answers the estimators expect to deliver and, thus, whether the estimate is worth writing. If the estimators cannot venture the answers, then they are in no position to draft, needing rather to commission research. If, during the course of drafting and coordinating an estimate, the evidence proves not to support the presumed answers, the answers can be revised. It is when the TORs are not done well that one encounters, especially, the problem of a forceful individual's being able to dominate the process. []

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The Chairman asked General Odom why he thinks TORs are not being drafted adequately now? The General responded that he believes the problem stems from a felt need for speed, a need to have a product on the street in the shortest possible time. Some analytical problems the Community faces are tough and need to be thought through before we tackle them. There is, for example, a substantial body of literature on instability in the Third World, yet every time the Community addresses the prospects for the stability of a Third World state, we start all over again. The relevant methodologies exist. If one cannot understand a Third World country's military establishment, plus five or six other key factors and problems, then one cannot understand that country's prospects. []

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He had been struck, the General continued, during the Board's consideration of President Aquino's staying power in the Philippines, by the persistence of the oligarchy and the extent to which it still underlies Philippine democracy. An analogue exists in El Salvador. Yet such basic realities are difficult to get discussed during an estimate's drafting and coordination. General Horton responded that the NIC will spend more time refining its approach to an estimate. []

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Mr. Fuller acknowledged that TORs may currently be flabby because they deliberately do not presuppose the conclusions that will be reached. If we in effect preview the key judgments in the TORs, we will be engaging in a quite

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different kind of estimative process. The Vice Chairman suggested that, while doing so would more likely gain the principals' attention, there would be downsides in prejudging issues. General Odom thought it would be worth the risk. []

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Mr. Hutchinson noted that many recent estimates have, in fact, been research papers, the research being necessary precisely because answers could not be ventured. If it had been possible to venture more answers, more penetrating discussions could have occurred. These circumstances argue for completing the research elsewhere in the Community before an NIO attempts to elicit a more estimative product. []

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Mr. Hill, representing the Secretary of the Air Force, stated that he is familiar with all the criticisms of the estimative process, and, on the basis of his two year's experience with the Board, none of them are correct. The process works; no one has ever been prevented from stating their views, which happens frequently. He could not, indeed, be more impressed with the objectivity and integrity of the system we now have. []

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Rear Admiral Studeman, Director of Naval Intelligence, judged the topic before the Board most important and that General Horton has captured the correct course of action for the future. Going through this process, though, drives one to think about what tools estimates provide intelligence officers. Rather than worrying too much about whether estimates are policy prescriptive, intelligence officers should be thinking about ensuring that estimates are used to influence policy. It is simply not enough to throw information into the policy or resource arenas and then allow someone else to make use of it without the benefit of intelligence follow-up or support. []

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The military, Admiral Studeman continued, apply a broad definition to policy to include resource decisionmaking. Military-oriented estimates are requested for specific resource reasons, and we should probably look at how well that connection is being made. In the Navy, a one-page executive summary of an estimate is drafted for sending up the line, and it includes only those portions that have resource implications for the Navy. What comes out of the estimative process must be taken to its logical extreme. []

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Among the key questions is whether the body of an estimate is complete and relevant. The answer is most often yes. But too often the judgments reflect group-think, not capturing radical views. The Navy does not like to have to grapple with CIA's suggestion of the Soviets' possessing a super submarine, but the need to do so leads the Navy to give the possibility more serious consideration. Attempts have been made to use contractors to provide the radical views that need to be considered, but they do not do as well as they might. Estimates also tend to have a format that is long and narrative; the Navy would like to get the executive summaries needed by decisionmakers who have little time to read or think. []

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General Horton responded that the Admiral's last point had been made also at the NIC's last conference [] and he is considering whether a one-page precis or an estimate should be written. The Admiral responded that, when the Community is rewriting the rules of estimating, it should address the issue of whether the Community should produce net assessments. He is neither for or against doing so. []

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Ambassador Abramowitz, Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, stated that his remarks will reflect what he has observed during his rather short membership on the Board. First, the utility of estimates is also intimately related in considering the integrity and objectivity of the process. Yet the Board has not discussed utility much and should do so at some later date. In his experience, estimates do not contribute much. The problem may be in the marketing of estimates, or more precisely in their lack of cogency. []

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On the question of integrity and objectivity, the biggest problems in the past have related to a relatively small number of issues--e.g., the Philippines, Iran, a few African issues, Nicaragua, and a few military questions. The difficulty is in arriving at what is and what is not. These issues are inherently controversial and also raise such issues that CIA is presumed to be justifying covert actions, INR with protecting current foreign policies, and the military with justifying large budgets. And on these issues, senior policymakers feel very strongly. The problem, then, is to bend over backward to ensure we are pursuing objectivity. One approach is to force the emergence of alternative views and to expose differences over facts and judgments to the policymakers. One problem is that policymakers on controversial issues often desire the Community to deliver a consensus view. We can understand the political need, and the imperative working, for consensus, but we should resist it if there are differences. []

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Mr. Kerr, CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence, stated that the process we are now going through is valuable, per se, but he is struck by the Ambassador's point on the lack of value of the product to the consumers. The Community may get something out of producing estimates, but it is a very expensive process. He calculates that his Directorate devoted a minimum of 30 man-years to preparing estimates last year; it is important to look at what difference that investment made. He tends to agree with General Odom that more time should be spent on TORs, especially those of the more important estimates. But he would add that we need also to take a retrospective look at what difference an estimate made and whether it addressed the right issues. []

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There are problems with the objectivity and integrity of estimates, Mr. Kerr continued, even if it is primarily one of perceptions. And there are many explanations. One is the NIO, with a forceful personality and near exclusive access to the policy level, who presses too hard to impose his particular views. Some agency representatives do not sufficiently assert themselves and are run over by the process. It is important that the NIOs understand their obligation to involve the entire Community and to address the hard questions. NIOs should focus most on questions, rather than answers. []

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Another dimension of the perception problem, Mr. Kerr continued, is the late introduction of views by the DCI and DDCI, which can be interpreted as driving the estimate to reach particular conclusions, and which an NIO can use to force an estimate in directions he desires. Finally, there are too many estimates that are research papers or simply descriptive. He does, on the other hand, agree with General Odom that there are cases where just getting the Community together to address an issue has value. []

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Brigadier General Breth, Director of Marine Corps Intelligence, stated that participation in the estimative process could not be more valuable for his organization, the smallest of the intelligence organizations with the fewest analysts. His organization does not have problems, like the Navy, in getting the estimative product to the highest levels of the Corps. Participation in the process, through which his people get a good feel for the subject matter, allows them to be all the more effective when presenting the product to higher levels. [REDACTED]

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USMC participation is particularly useful also in permitting it to allocate its meager resources most responsibly. Involvement in the Philippine estimates, for example, had allowed the Corps to identify certain gaps in intelligence collection which were appropriate for it to fill. He agrees that the process will only function as well as the quality of the people assigned allows. And he thinks it incumbent on those involved at all levels to have done their homework so they may make their required contribution. [REDACTED]

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Brigadier General Hyman, representing Army Intelligence, observed that, as a newcomer to the estimative process, he has no special wisdom to impart. But getting the right people involved in the process makes considerable sense to him. As far as he is aware, the major problem is making last-minute changes to estimate drafts, which precludes the principals' getting back to the working level for consultation, and thus not being able at Board meetings to offer considered views. Army Intelligence urges that we build into the estimative process the mandatory remanding of estimates when late changes are proffered. [REDACTED]

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Colonel Lotz, representing Air Force Intelligence, judged that the Community has an estimative process that works and that, if it follows General Horton's recommendations, it can now fine-tune. Much of the perceived problem is simply that of bright, young representatives attempting to tangle with senior, experienced NIOs. At the NFIB level, the service intelligence organizations have always been invited to express their views and, even though only NFIB observers, have always been made to feel by the DCI and DDCI that they can include those views in any estimate under consideration. He further considers one point touched on particularly important: analysts from the NIOs on down must always stay abreast of policymakers' views, or they will have divorced themselves from the real world. [REDACTED]

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Rear Admiral Schmitt, USN, representing the Defense Intelligence Agency, judged the overall estimative process satisfactory; we should take advantage of this current effort to educate the Intelligence Community about how the estimative process works. That said, TORs should contain an explicit statement of why an estimate is being written--what its policy relevance is--which would reduce the number undertaken. Because there are so many estimates now, the principals are not up to speed on many of them. In fact, there are only a dozen or so produced each year that require the principals' close attention. [REDACTED]

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As for the Board itself, the Admiral continued, he wonders if it is the right-size group to consider estimates; some its members have little to contribute. And if an estimate deserves the Board's close attention, would it not be better to meet several times on an estimate, rather than sitting just

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once to approve it. To help analysts, we should draft a code of ethics about what is expected of them. They could use the code with their superiors to protect themselves and to enlist a helping hand. [REDACTED]

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The Chairman recalled that the DIA in its written comments had urged that policymakers not be allowed to see drafts. The Admiral responded that that comment had been struck from DIA's position. DIA does believe drafts should be shared with policymakers under certain circumstances. [REDACTED]

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Mr. Bacher, representing the Energy Department, judged that one problem attaching to perceptions of the objectivity of estimates has to do with the questions estimators are asked to address. If US policy is already established on a given question, that guarantees there will be suspicions about the estimate. This issue needs to be addressed. The Chairman responded that estimators need to focus on offering the best possible predictions of what is going to happen, whether or not US policy has been set, and even when it is changing, such as in the Persian Gulf currently. [REDACTED]

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Mr. Mulholland, Special Assistant for National Security to the Secretary of the Treasury, stated that he is pleased that General Horton's briefing was more critical of the estimative process than had been his draft report to the NSC. That report would be even more credible if it contained a contribution from an outside panel, rather than only our own evaluation. In regard to safeguards, he recommends that the DCI's Senior Review Panel be given an expanded structure and a larger role, making it akin to the disestablished Board of National Estimates. Such an organization could, for example, review TORs, which the principals do not have time to do. [REDACTED]

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Mr. Geer, representing the Federal Bureau of Investigation, judged that his position is not the best vantage point from which to comment. He has, however, been very impressed with the objectivity of the process and has noted no hesitation of the part of the principals about offering views. The key to estimating, in his view, is to validate the need for any given one and to evaluate how well it responded. [REDACTED]

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The Chairman responded that perhaps General Horton's study should propose contacting senior policymakers on the objectivity of estimates. He is opposed to constructing any Chinese wall between the Community and policymakers, which would only further reduce the utility of estimates. General Horton noted that NSC staff and other policymakers had attended the NIC's recent conference and had addressed the issue of the relevance of estimates to policymaking. Mr. Fuller is continuing this contact. [REDACTED]

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Mr. Fuller responded that a certain schizophrenia attaches to estimating. To be considered relevant, an estimate often must present fresh, even radical, views. If an estimate just presents a well-known consensus, it will be little read. If we offer interesting insights, we do so at the risk of being off the mark more often. The Community has trouble with "interesting estimates," but those are the ones guaranteed a broader readership and serve to stimulate fresh thinking. [REDACTED]

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The Vice Chairman observed that the State Department has a very different view about what is controversial than its Bureau of Intelligence and Research and CIA. And, ironically, the Community pays more attention than anyone else to objectivity and integrity, especially on products on controversial issues such as Angola and Nicaragua, because it knows its products will be suspect. The point here is that objectivity is largely in the eye of the beholder. One policymaker may judge an estimate totally objective, while another will consider it wholly driven by subjective views. We thus may never be able to achieve the ideal. []

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A problem attaching to the utility of estimates, the Vice Chairman continued, is that an estimate can be absolutely right and totally ignored. The Community, for example, unanimously approved several estimates on Lebanon in 1983, predicting exactly what was going to happen and stating that the chances of the US' realizing its objectives there were extremely weak. Another example was the European reaction to our actions vis-a-vis the Soviet gas export pipeline. Perhaps there are some things we might do to make estimates harder to ignore. Or perhaps we should just be more realistic about what we seek to accomplish. []

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The Chairman suggested that, if an estimate is well presented, the Community may be able to force policymakers to think beyond today's concerns. If the Community thinks ahead, policymakers will have to also. []

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Turning to the role of the DCI in the estimative process, the Chairman stated that, at least initially, he will take a close look at TORs with the Vice Chairman to ensure that they are best calculated to produce the best estimate. He does not plan to get involved in the drafting process, unless something goes badly askew. Rather, he will wait to get involved further until a draft is circulated to the principals, and he will come to the Board meetings prepared to hear what the principals have to say. He will also attempt to avoid making last minute changes. []

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The Chairman thereupon instructed General Horton to review his draft report to the NSC in light of the comments made at today's meeting. He then asked when the Hutchinson review of guidelines will commence. Mr. Hutchinson responded that he will get started immediately, but proceed on a track separate from that of the report to the NSC. []

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The DCI then instructed the principals to make sure that their representatives are well chosen, that they are given the time to do the necessary work, that they are given access to their principals, and that the principals do their homework before Board meetings. []

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General Horton requested the principals to please forward to him any further comments they might have on the draft report, which he will recirculate to them after he has redrafted it. He noted that the guidelines process will be ongoing. []

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The Chairman asked the principals if there were any further business. When none responded, he adjourned the meeting. []

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Those Participating

Judge William H. Webster, Chairman
 Mr. Robert M. Gates, Vice Chairman
 Mr. Richard J. Kerr, Deputy Director for Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency
 Ambassador Morton I. Abramowitz, Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research, Department of State
 Rear Admiral Robert Schmitt, USN, Acting for Director, Defense Intelligence Agency
 Lieutenant General William E. Odom, USA, Director, National Security Agency
 Mr. Jimmie D. Hill, Acting for Secretary of the Air Force
 Mr. Douglas Mulholland, Special Assistant to the Secretary (National Security), Department of Treasury
 Mr. Stephen E. Bacher, Acting for Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intelligence, Department of Energy
 Mr. James H. Geer, Assistant Director, Intelligence Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation
 Rear Admiral William O. Studeman, USN, Director of Naval Intelligence
 Brigadier General Stanley Hyman, USA, Acting for Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
 Colonel George B. Lotz, II, USAF, Acting for Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
 Brigadier General Frank J. Breth, USMC, Director of Intelligence

Those Attending

Mr. Graham E. Fuller, Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council
 [redacted] Deputy Director for Requirements and Evaluation, Intelligence Community Staff
 Lieutenant General Edward J. Heinz, USAF, Director, Intelligence Community Staff
 Major General Frank B. Horton, III, USAF, Chairman, National Intelligence Council
 Mr. H. F. Hutchinson, Jr., Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council
 [redacted] Deputy Director, Intelligence Community Staff

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